Prayer for the New Year

On New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, the household gathers at the table or at the Christmas tree or manger scene. Many people make New Year's Day a day of prayer for peace.

All make the sign of the cross. The leader begins:

Let us praise the Lord of days and seasons and years, saying:
Glory to God in the highest!
R/. And peace to his people on earth!

The leader may use these or similar words to introduce the blessing:

Our lives are made of days and nights, of seasons and years,
for we are part of a universe of suns and moons and planets.
We mark ends and we make beginnings and, in all, we
praise God for the grace and mercy that fill our days.

Then the Scripture is read, Book of Genesis 1:14-19:

Listen to the words of the Book of Genesis:

God said: "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the fixed times, the days and the years, and serve as luminaries in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth." And so it happened: God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night; and he made the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw how good it was. Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day.

(The family's Bible may be used for an alternate reading such as Psalm 90:1-4.)

Reader: The Word of the Lord.
R/. Thanks be to God.

After a time of silence, members of the household offer prayers of thanksgiving for the past year, and of intercession for the year to come. On January 1, it may be appropriate to conclude these prayers with the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (in Part VII: Litanies) since this is the solemn feast of Mary, Mother of God. In conclusion, all join hands for the Lord's Prayer. Then the leader continues:

Let us now pray for God's blessing in the new year.

After a short silence, parents may place their hands on their children in blessing as the leader says:

Remember us, O God;
from age to age be our comforter.
You have given us the wonder of time,
blessings in days and nights, seasons and years.
Bless your children at the turning of the year
and fill the months ahead with the bright hope
that is ours in the coming of Christ.
You are our God, living and reigning, forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Another prayer for peace may be said:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
R/. Amen.

—*Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi*

The leader says:

Let us bless the Lord.

All respond, making the sign of the cross:

Thanks be to God.

The prayer may conclude with the singing of a Christmas carol.